

News and Gossip of The Stage

Tarkington Play Serves Well to Bring Back Miss Burke

Author Discusses the Timely Question of the Flapper and the Older Woman in "The Intimate Strangers."

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

It would be difficult to find a play better suited to the excellent purpose of restoring Miss Billie Burke to the speaking stage than Booth Tarkington's comedy, "The Intimate Strangers." The author discusses the timely question of the flapper and the—well, the older woman. The young girl, it may be observed, plays a part in social existence so dominating that the era has truthfully been called the age of the flapper. Maybe that is not true. Every era is in reality the age of youth, despite Dean Jowett's dictum that all of us are likely to make mistakes, even the youngest. Yet the flapper never seemed to pervade the scene as she does to-day.

Is it a relic of the war when she dashed about in uniform at the wheel of a motor or perilously continued canteen work in danger zones? Yet the flapper was not the active woman in that work. The Red Cross did not send broad women under twenty-five. So it may not be the war that put the youngest women into the foreground of life. Maybe the privilege of cutting the most extreme of fashions had its influence in making her to be conspicuous. She can wear the shortest skirts. Trousers are certainly inadvisable to the woman over twenty if she would preserve some of the allurements of her sex. Bobbed hair seems to be more decorative, as well as most hygienic when its arrested development is revealed on the scalp of youth. Then the fashions were never more subservient to the young nor less considerate of those facing the middle years.

Important as the flapper may seem, however, in the passing scene, it is not certain that she plays any decisive part in life. The hero of "The Intimate Strangers" may have had his head temporarily turned by the insurgent attractions of youth, but there were in the girlish siren deficiencies that soon began to pall. She might dash about the place with her curls flying behind her like a young Diana. Yet these striking physical traits did not blind the hero, at least of Mr. Tarkington's play, to the superficiality, vanity and insincerity of the flapper. He soon had enough of her. Nineteen was at the end of the play, well satisfied to yoke with indulgent twenty-one, who took her back without a struggle.

So it usually happens in life. More above a certain age may temporarily suffer from the astigmatism caused by what David Graham Phillips called a speck of dust in the eye. Usually they get over it. The baby vampire the Hatttons "ranged" as the French put it if they did not invent her, has become synonymous with the flapper. Her day is usually brief and the man of mature years glad to take refuge in the society of some woman who offers him more than the beauty of extreme youth, the audacity of ignorance and the interest which knows no other ambition than the desire for admiration.

Mr. Tarkington shows the flash of interest which the youthful Deilah awakens in the man approaching the late thirties. It is scarcely more than a flash of interest. It is little more enduring. But for her aggressive tactics she might have been altogether neglected. As it is she bowls him over. It is from this point of departure that the novelist begins to build the little fable that his play contains.

There is a faint surprise on the face of Miss Burke when she observes that in spite of his recent declaration of love he has sensed the youth and beauty of the girl in knickerbockers. She sees him led off to the front seat of the motor with a certain wonder. It is in the invention of her scheme of revenge that the actress attains the highest mark of her histrionism in the play. She is not flustered into nervous rivalry. She will not endeavor to make the flapper niece on her own grounds. But the man who was so unmistakably in love with her and now feels so moved by the presence of the young girl shall suffer for a while before his final release from suspense.

Quite self-possessed, the well bred woman of the world, Miss Burke as heroine allows herself no apprehensions as to the result of her little comedy. He shall think her very old, altogether too old for an appropriate wife. Of course, she is nothing of the kind. Yet he shall be led to believe that she is. In reality his sufferings are doubled.

It takes but a short time for him to realize that the woman he has fallen in love with is the woman for him. But her age? She will talk as if she were so advanced in this vale of tears. Miss Burke, still as heroine, puts him to further confusion long after he has come to his own conclusions as to the comparative desirability of the two women. He is through forever with the flapper. She and her bobbed hair and her knickerbockers are already on his nerves. Whatever her age may be, the aunt is better.

Thus Mr. Tarkington disposes of the flapper in his little corner of society. He shows what he thinks of her. In a way, his solution of the question seems probable enough. Her capacity for upsetting people for a little while is much greater than her power to cause any enduring impression. But she can, under certain conditions, be undeniably a speck in the eye. She does not happen in this entertaining comedy to "assume such importance," but Mr. Tarkington has well sketched the overwhelming personality of the flapper in modern social traffic. Maybe another playwright will try to show how evil an influence she may be when her power is exerted more enduringly.

The Earlier Vampire.

The woman who intervened in a series of plays such as Lillian Bradley's "The Governor's Lady," which David Belasco produced, was always younger than the wife she supplanted, whether it was in "Just a Wife" or "The Lady From Oklahoma," but was not at all in the flapper class. That was before the day of such extreme youth as the skin of the day must possess. The women who almost stood in the place of the wife and in some of the plays of that family did usurp her post, were well beyond nineteen. Most of them were founded on a certain celebrated case of that period in which the certain person, although still very young, was more than twenty. The dramatist who deals with the situation as it exists to-day must devote his study to the flapper in her present incarnation.



Miss SILENE JOHNSON in "The Title" at Belmont.



Miss BETTY LINLEY in "The Great Broxopp" at the Punch and Judy.



Miss GENEVIEVE MITCHELL in "Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic" at the New Amsterdam.



Miss DOROTHY SHOEMAKER and FELIX KREMBES in "The Man's Name" at the Republic.



Miss RUTH DRAPER in "Midnight Frolic" at the Theatre.



Miss TALLULAH BANKHEAD in "Everyday" at Bijou.



Miss SUE MACMANAMY in "Nature's Nobleman" at the Apollo.

Miss Draper Back With New Sketches

Home from her successful engagement in London and Paris Miss Ruth Draper will make her first appearance of the season in her character sketches next Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock in the Times Square Theatre.

Two character sketches which have never been given in America before will be included in her first programme. They are "Le Retour de l'Aveugle," the story of the return of a blind soldier from the war, and "At a Dance in London."

Also on the first programme will be "A New York Factory Girl," "At an Art Exhibition," "A Quiet Morning in Bed," "A German Governess" and "In a Railway Station on the Western Plains."

The latter was one of her most successful sketches last season.

Recitals on the afternoon of November 22 and the Sunday nights of November 26 and 27 will follow, after which Miss Draper will start a transcontinental tour.

Paris Beauty for 'Midnight Frolic'

Athea, a beauty "discovered" by Mr. Ziegfeld in the Paris music halls, is to be billed as "Athea, Enigmatisma," and will puzzle the crowds at the New Amsterdam Theatre when he reveals his new "Midnight Frolic" next Thursday night.

Athea comes to America after winning a beauty competition conducted by La Vie Parisienne. When she was met at the pier on her arrival by the Lafayette she wore shoes tipped with feathers and a knee watch—which is a little more tosy, or at least higher, than the ankle watch.

"I believe that Athea will present a startling and unusual bit for even blasé New York," says the manager. "Her beauty, grace and charm have quite captivated Paris audiences."

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Did You Hear?

That Gadski Will Return to Opera and Mrs. Carter Feared Comedy.

By LUCIEN CLEVELAND.

NOW that Mme. Johanna Gadski has so successfully broken the musical ice and come back as a German singer to be enthusiastically applauded by her compatriots at her concert she will return to another musical field in which her earlier successes were noted. In other words, Mme. Gadski is going to sing in opera. She has been engaged by the Chicago Opera Association for a number of appearances. She will sing *Isolde* in Chicago with the company and possibly *Elizabeth* in "Tannhauser." When the engagement at the Chicago Manhattan Opera House begins in January, Mme. Gadski will appear as *Isolde* in a German performance of Wagner's opera which is to be given at least twice. On the success of the first performance will depend the number of appearances that Mme. Gadski will make with the organization.

Mrs. Gadski has announced her intention of confining her concert tour for the time being to Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis and certain cities of the Middle West.

Mrs. Carter Not Certain.

When Mrs. Leslie Carter saw "The Circle" in London she arrived so late at the theatre that she missed the first act. She saw enough, however, to make her unimpressed. The London actress of *Lady Kitty*—she was *Lady Kitty*—who came out here once to act with John Drew in "The Duke of Killmarnock"—played the part altogether for comedy. It was comedy rather broad in its strokes at that. Mrs. Carter was in dismay.

"I have never acted out and out comedy," she said to the representative of *The New York Herald*, "although in my plays there have been scenes of a comic character. But to play comedy role with no relief, to be constantly searching for the laugh—that was a task I felt rather unequal to. So I saw Mr. Archie Selwyn and told him very frankly that I did not think I could play that role as it was acted in London and that if he was looking for that I was afraid I could not—well, I was just simply afraid I couldn't. That's all there was about it. He was nice enough to say that I must play it and that I was at perfect liberty to do it as I thought the character demanded."

Of course, there is a great deal that is serious and human in *Lady Kitty*. She is not merely a funny old lady. I tried to bring out something of the seriousness in her own character and it may be to judge by the kindness of everybody, that I have succeeded."

Mrs. Carter does not think that the English stage has anything to teach America's actors just now. "But really," she added, "American actors are, in a way, so much more fortunate than their British colleagues in having such a public to play before. The American audience is so alert and sympathetic, so keen for every point that the actor may make, so expectant that he will do his best, that such a public is a stimulant which is bound to inspire any players."

She Knows a Full House.

Maybe Mme. Jeritza took a chance when she came to a strange country from Vienna, but it is not the first time she has risked her luck. Mme. Marie Jeritza, blonde, young and beautiful, is said to be the best singer in Vienna. She even goes far enough to say that she is not afraid to meet any prima donna of any nationality.

Mme. Jeritza is the wife of Baron Popper, who is a son of Blanche Marchesi by her first husband. Thus she is a granddaughter by marriage of the famous pedagogues, Mathilde Marchesi, who lived for years in Paris, although she was also a Viennese. Mme. Jeritza, however, acquired her knowledge of singing in Vienna, where she has been ever since her debut in Olmutz ten years ago.

She did not at once achieve the Imperial Opera House. Indeed, she was first heard at the Volks Oper. It is reported that the late Franz Joseph, who loved music but also knew a pretty woman when he saw it, heard Mme. Jeritza at the Volks Oper and recommended her immediate engagement at the Imperial Opera House on the ground that a little beauty might not be a drawback to the concert which includes a number of competent but rather mature artists. She has been at the Imperial Opera House throughout all the political changes of the last few years. She sang *André* in Otello Lettner's setting of the Pierre Louys story, and was the first of Vienna Salomes. She is a native of Brunn.

When Is a Ballet Russian?

When the ballet corps first brought from Petrograd to dance with Mordkin and Pavlova revealed a member named Hill, on the programme there was a snag. The name looked so unfamiliar surrounded with undoubtedly sinuous pure Muscovite monikers. It appeared that although from Russia the name of the man was not Hill. He had studied dancing in Petrograd. His grandfather had years before emigrated to Russia from England and his descendants had remained there. Later Miss Doris Faithfull came in one of the Pavlova ballets. She was also English and remained here.

In the company which closed its engagement at the Manhattan Opera House last night was Hilda Butova, who was second only to the incomparable star of the company. She was beautiful enough and skillful enough to be entitled to stand next to Mme. Pavlova on the list of dancers. She is an English girl named Boud.

But not all the strangers are English. Fr. Vasinski, who has been promoted to dance with Mme. Pavlova in the *Golden Slave*, and Mlle. Butova in the Hungarian rhapsody, is an American boy named Parker. He is a native of Chicago, comes of an old theatre family and used to dance the shepherd in "The Music Box," a quartet of John Murray Anderson's "What's in a Name?"

Royalty on the Stage.

Speaking of Russians, the late reigning family of Russia has reached the stage at last. Robert Housman has put them in a play called "Winding Stairs." In a lonely house supposed to be haunted by two young Americans discover the Crown Princess, and as they kept prisoners there have the opportunity to see all the grand dukes and their plottings to restore the Romanoffs to the stage. One of the Americans marries the Crown Princess, and as they are kept prisoners there have the opportunity to see all the grand dukes and their plottings to restore the Romanoffs to the stage. One of the Americans marries the Crown Princess, and as they are kept prisoners there have the opportunity to see all the grand dukes and their plottings to restore the Romanoffs to the stage.

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Calendar of Theatrical First Nights

MONDAY.

APOLLO THEATRE—Louis Mann in a comedy, "Nature's Nobleman," by Samuel Shipman and Miss Clara Lipman.

BELMONT THEATRE—Richard G. Herndon will present Lumsden Hare in Arnold Bennett's comedy, "The Title."

PROVINCETOWN THEATRE—The Provincetown Players will open their season with "The Verge," a play by Susan Glaspell.

TUESDAY.

REPUBLIC THEATRE—A. H. Woods will present "The Man's Name," by Eugene Walter and Miss Marjorie Chase, with a cast headed by Lowell Sherman.

FUSCH AND JUDY THEATRE—Iden Payne will present "The Great Broxopp," an English comedy by A. A. Milne.

MADISON THEATRE—A season of ten weeks of German comic operas in their original language will be started by the Viennese opera, "Bruder Stranblinger (The Strangler)," by Edmund Eysler.

WEDNESDAY.

BIJOU THEATRE—Mary Kirkpatrick will produce "Everyday," a play by Miss Rachel Crothers, with a cast headed by Miss Tallulah Bankhead and Henry Hull.

THURSDAY.

NEW AMSTERDAM ROOF—Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., will revive his "Midnight Frolic," with the seventeenth edition of that production. The new offering has been written by Gene Buck and Dave Stampfer and staged by Leon Errol. Joseph Urban did the scenic investiture. Will Rogers, larrikin throwing humorist, will be welcomed back from the movies. Athea, Paris beauty, will appear among many other players. A living tableau by Ben Ali Haggin will be another feature. A new restaurant has been installed.

PLAYHOUSE—Miss Grace George will be presented by William A. Brady in "Marie Antoinette," by Remyzant.

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